

A SECOND  
L E T T E R  
TO THE

Rev. Mr. JOHN PALMER, &c.

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[ Price Six - Pence. ]

SECOND

R E T T E

TO THE



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L E T T E R

T O

The Rev. Mr. JOHN PALMER,

IN DEFENCE OF THE

Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity.

B Y

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S.

I love to pour out all myself, as plain  
As downright Shippen, or as old Montaigne.

POPE.

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PRINTED BY H. BALDWIN,

FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

M D C C L X X X.



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Doctrine of Philological Necessity.



JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

I have to beg out all my acknowledgments  
for the loan of the ship, or of the ship.

To be

L O N D O N :

PRINTED BY R. BARNES,  
FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 7, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.  
M DCC LXXX.



DEAR SIR,

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# Your

Your treatise, I perceive, is deemed to contain the strength of the cause you have espoused; and I think I should do wrong to shrink from the discussion, while I have any hope of prevailing upon a person so fully equal to it, to canvass it with me, and while I think there is any reasonable prospect, that, by continuing a friendly controversy, any of the difficulties attending the subject may be cleared up. The question before us is truly momentous, the arguments that decide in my favour I think to be very plain, your objections appear to me to admit of sufficiently easy answers; and, in my opinion, it is nothing but imaginary consequences, or such as are grossly misunderstood, at which the mind of any man can revolt.

You, who know me pretty well, will not say that I would flur over a difficulty by which I was really pressed; and *arrogant* as you may suppose me to be, you will think me *sincere*, and that my confidence is derived

rived from a full persuasion, well or ill founded, on a subject which I have long considered, and with respect to which I have formed so deliberate and decided a judgment.

I shall divide my present letter, as I did my former, into distinct heads, and shall discuss them in what appears to me to be their most natural order. I wish you had divided your *Appendix* in the same manner, as it contributes much to perspicuity, and relieves the attention of the reader.



## SECTION I.

*Of the stating of the Question.*

**Y**OU complain of me for having *mispresented your meaning*, when what you assert on the occasion, in my opinion, confirms my representation. I said that you supposed the mind capable of determining *contrary to any motive whatever*, or, as I afterwards express it, either *without, or contrary to motives*. You reply, p. 24, “ I never said, or supposed, that a rational being  
 “ can act without any motive, good or  
 “ bad ; but the most that I ever said was,  
 “ that, in the very same circumstances, in  
 “ which the choice, or determination of  
 “ the mind, was directed to one object of  
 “ pursuit, it might have brought itself to  
 “ will or determine on the pursuit of a  
 “ different and contrary one.”

Now

Now where is the real difference between my stating of the case and yours? You say you make choice of one object of pursuit, for which, by your present confession, you must have had *some motive*; and yet might have taken a different and contrary one. But how could you do this, without acting against the motives which led you to prefer the other? If you admit that we never act but with the *strongest* motives, as well as never without *some* motive (and one of these seems to be the necessary consequence of the other) you must, in this case, have acted against the strongest motive. And, if for this possible determination there was no *motive at all* (and if it was overbalanced by other motives, it was, in fact, no motive at all) you must have acted *without* any motive for what you did, as well as *against* motives to the contrary.

Besides, what is the boasted power of *self determination*, if the mind cannot actually determine itself *without* any motive at all,

or *contrary* to any motives, at pleasure. If this be not the case, it is very improperly called *self determination*.

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## SECTION II.

Of CERTAINTY, or UNIVERSALITY, as  
the Ground of concluding that any Thing  
is NECESSARY.

**I**N order to shew that the distinction between *certainty* and *necessity*, on which you and others lay so much stress, is nothing to your purpose, I observed that all that we mean by *necessity*, in any case, is *the cause of certainty*, or of universality; and that this is applicable to things *corporeal* or *mental*, without distinction; that the reason, and the only reason, why we say a stone falls to the ground *necessarily*, is that it *constantly* and *universally* does so; and therefore that, if the determination of the mind be always according to motives, the difference



ference as I said p. 23, cannot be in the *reality*, but in the *kind* of the necessity. "The necessity must be equally strict and absolute in both cases, let the *causes* of the necessity by ever so different."

This argument I said you had not given sufficient attention to. But you now tell me, p. 7, "You were so far from overlooking it, that you regarded it as the basis on which my argument for the necessary determination of the mind rested, but that you considered," p. 8. "that what you had insisted on to establish the distinction between physical and moral necessity, as really replying to this very argument," and you refer me to p. 49, &c. of your treatise.

Now I have carefully read over those pages, but I am very far from finding in them any thing to justify your reference. Because, admitting the distinction you contend for between *physical* and *moral* neces-

fity, still it is a *necessity*; and if necessity have any meaning at all, it is that, while the laws of nature are what they are, the event denominated necessary *could not have been otherwise*.

You say, p. 50, "We may multiply ever  
 " so many other causes, or circumstances,  
 " concurring with and leading to the choice  
 " that is made, it is plain they can only  
 " operate as *moral*, not as *physical* causes."

But to what purpose is the distinction of physical and moral, if they be *real* causes, when all real causes must, in given circumstances, produce real and constant effects?

" They may be," you say, "*occasions*,  
 " or *grounds*, of determination, but they  
 " do not *form*, or *necessitate* the determination."  
 I will allow your language; but if, in fact, the mind never *does* determine otherwise than according to these same *motives*, *occasions*, or *grounds*, there is nothing in any received mode of reasoning  
 that

that will justify you in saying, that the mind, even *could*, in those circumstances, have determined otherwise, or that, according to the present laws of nature respecting the mind, the determination was not, in the strictest sense of the word, *necessary*. For there cannot be any evidence of the existence of a *power* independent of its known *effects*.

In what manner do we prove the existence of *all powers* but by their actual *operation*? Give me, in the whole compass of nature, any other case similar to this of your *self determining power*, that is, a case in which we admit a *real power* without having ever seen its *effects*. All our rules of reasoning in philosophy would be violated by such a proceeding. *Effects* are the only evidences of *powers*, or *causes*; and the immediate consequence of this is, that if no event ever *does* take place, we can have no reason to believe that it *can* take place. This is as easily applicable to the case before



fore us as any whatever, Produce a case in which the mind indisputably *determines itself* without any motive whatever, and then, *but then only*, shall I admit that motives have no necessary influence over its determination.

I must still maintain, therefore, that you have given no answer at all to my argument for the doctrine of necessity, as inferred from the consideration of *constancy* and *universality*.

There is, I repeat it, just the same propriety in calling the determinations of the mind, as there is in calling the falling of a stone, *necessary*. It is not the *same law*, or power, in nature; that causes both, and therefore they may be distinguished by what names you please; but they equally *ensure the event*; and the course of nature must be changed before the results, in either case, can be otherwise than they are observed to be.

### SECTION III.

## SECTION III.

*Of the Consequence of admitting the CER-  
TAINTY of Determination.*

**W**HAT you reply to my observations concerning *certainty*, and the several distinctions of it, is so manifestly unsatisfactory, that I must beg leave to recall your attention to the argument. I asserted that if the determination of the mind be, in any proper sense of the word, *certain*, all the same consequences, even the very frightful ones that you describe, will follow, just as on the supposition of its being *necessary*; for that, in this case, the two words cannot but mean the very same thing.

You now acknowledge, p. 9, “that moral certainty may be a real one, though  
“ not

“not physical,” and, p. 8, “that certainty  
“is as different as the different causes or  
“occasions of it.” Now I really cannot see what these differences (which I will admit to be as many as you please) can signify; if, as you allow, the result, is invariably the same. This is certainly a case to which you cannot have given sufficient attention, or you could not treat it so lightly as you do. I shall, therefore *open*, and *expand* it a little for you, to give you an opportunity of seeing more distinctly what it is that you *do* admit, when you allow, under whatever distinction you please, that the determination of the mind is *certain*, or, in other words, *definite in definite circumstances*.

Every man, you must allow, is born with a certain constitution of body and mind, intirely independent of his own choice. The circumstances in which he is born, with respect to country, parents, education, and advantages or disadvantages  
of



of all kinds, are, likewise altogether independent of himself. It is no matter when, you say, that *his first proper volition* takes place, for you must admit it is, in *certain definite circumstances*, independent of himself. His determination, therefore, being by the hypothesis, *certain*, or *definite* in those circumstances, whatever it be, it brings him into other, but definite, circumstances; whether foreseen or unforeseen by himself depends upon his judgment or sagacity. In these new circumstances, he makes another *definite choice*, or determination, concerning the *new objects* that are now before him; and this new determination brings him into other new circumstances. And thus his whole life passes in a constant succession of *circumstances* and *determinations*, all inseparably connected, till you come to the last determination of all, immediately preceeding the extinction of all his powers by death.

Now it is obvious to ask, if all this be really *certain*, one thing strictly depending

ing upon another, so that there is never known to be any variation from it, in what does it, or *can* it, differ from what is contended for by the necessarian. If I know my own principles, it is all that I want, call it by what name you please. You happen to like the word *certain*, whereas I prefer the word *necessary*; but our ideas *must* be the very same. We both chalk out a *definite path* for every man to walk in, from the commencement of his life to the termination of it. The path is the same, drawn by the same line, and by the same rule. It is a path that you admit no man ever gets out of; and this, I do assure you, is all that I mean, if I know my own meaning, when I say he never *can* get out of it: for the laws of his nature must be changed, so that his determinations must (contrary to the present hypothesis) not be definite in definite circumstances, before he *can* get out of it, from his birth to his death.

But

But you say, p. 9, " the power of agency  
 " still remains, if the certainty with which  
 " he acts be only a *moral* certainty, where-  
 " as by that which is *physical* it is destroy-  
 " ed." But if you reflect a moment, you  
 will perceive, that this is inconsistent with  
 what you just before granted. Because if,  
 in any case, the determination *might have*  
*been* otherwise than it is, it would not  
 have been *certain*, but *contingent*. *Cer-*  
*tainty* undoubtedly excludes all *possible va-*  
*riety*, for that implies *uncertainty*. Besides,  
 as I observed before, and I cannot repeat it  
 too often, till I ensure your attention to it,  
 what *proof* or *evidence* can you produce of  
 the reality or existence of any *power*, that  
 is never exerted. If, therefore, you allow  
 that all determinations whatever are certain,  
 being directed by motives, what evidence  
 can there be of a power to act contrary to  
 motives?

How unreasonable, then, is it to reply,  
 as you do, p. 13, to your child " Do not  
 I " you,



“ you, my son, see a vast difference between  
“ determining yourself, call it *certainly*,  
“ if you please, and being *necessarily* deter-  
“ mined by something else.” Because  
knowing the *absolute certainty* (though not  
necessity) of his determination, in the cir-  
cumstances in which you placed him, you  
should not have placed him in them, un-  
less you really *chose* that he should make the  
determination that you knew he *certainly*  
*would* make; and therefore, on your own  
maxims, you would do wrong to *blame*, or  
*punish* him.

You ask him whether “ he was not con-  
“ scious he had a power of refusing the  
“ apples;” whereas, by your own conces-  
sion, that power could not possibly be *exert-*  
*ed*, so as to be of any *use* to him, but on the  
supposition of what you previously knew  
did not exist, viz. *a different disposition of mind*,  
in consequence of which his love of apples  
would have been less, or his fear of punish-  
ment greater, than you *knew* it to be.

SECTION IV.

## SECTION IV.

*Of the supposed* CONSCIOUSNESS OF  
LIBERTY.

I Desired you to attend to the *phenomena* of *human nature*, to consider whether it be not a *fact*, that human volitions depend upon the previous disposition of their minds and the circumstances in which they are placed, in order to determine whether their volitions are not invariably *according to those circumstances*; and therefore whether, in propriety of language, it should not be said that they are always, and necessarily, determined by those circumstances, or motives. You reply, p. 22, “ if the phenomena of  
“ human nature are to determine the ques-  
“ tion, we must certainly include the  
“ *whole* phenomena, one of which is, that

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“ let

“ let actions be ever so definite in definite  
“ circumstances, they are still conscious  
“ of having it in their power to deter-  
“ mine otherwise than they actually did,”  
now I am surpris'd that you should not have  
been aware, that this is directly inconsistent  
with your own supposition, viz. the deter-  
mination being *definite*; for if it might  
have been *otherwise*, it would have been  
*indefinite*. No man can be conscious of an  
*impossibility*. If, therefore, the real phe-  
nomena, exclusive of all pretended consci-  
ousness, are in favour of our volitions being  
definite, all *possibility* of their being inde-  
finite is necessarily excluded; so that they  
could not have been different from what  
they actually are, in any given circum-  
stances.

Besides, reflect a little what is it of which  
we *can* be conscious; for consciousness has  
its limits, as well as other things. It is  
not that, with the same disposition of mind  
and in the same circumstances, the deter-  
mination



mination might have been different. This is a manifest fallacy. All that, in the nature of things, we *can* be conscious of, is that had we been differently disposed, we might have acted differently; that nothing but our own *will*, or pleasure, prevented our acting differently; which you know is not at all contrary to any thing contended for by necessarians. Consider particularly my *Additional Illustrations*, p. 286, &c.

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## SECTION V.

*Of the Difference between the WILL and the  
JUDGMENT.*

**I**N the passage to which you have now referred me, in your former treatise, p. 50, you lay great stress on the essential difference between the nature of the *will*, and that of the *judgment*. “The will, you say,

C 2

“ implies

“ implies, in its very nature, a freedom  
 “ from all controlling necessary influence.  
 “ It is the power of *self determination* be-  
 “ longing to an agent, the physical inde-  
 “ pendency of which on any thing foreign  
 “ to itself makes it to be what it is, or  
 “ constitutes its very essence. The differ-  
 “ ent mode of operation belonging to the  
 “ will,” p. 52, “ as distinct from the  
 “ other faculties of the mind, arises out  
 “ of its different nature. The will is an  
 “ independent, active principle, or faculty.  
 “ The other faculties are dependent and  
 “ merely passive, &c.”

Now I rather wonder that, in all this  
 loftiness of language, you should not have  
 perceived, that you are taking for granted  
 the very thing in dispute. If we judge of  
 the *powers* and *faculties* of man by his  
*actions* (and *what can we reason but from*  
*what we know*) we must conclude that he  
 is *not* possessed of any such faculty as you  
 describe. On the contrary, we see all men  
 without

without exception, driven to and fro, just as their circumstances and motives impel them, without ever once exerting (as far as appears) a single act of proper *self determination*. In all cases of sufficient magnitude, and in which there is sufficient opportunity given us to examine them, we see very plainly, that men are actuated by very *determinate motives*; and we are here, as in other similar cases, authorized to judge of obscure cases by those which are more distinct and evident, of the same kind.

Besides, so far am I from perceiving any such essential *difference* as you describe between the *will* and the *judgment*, that I perceive a remarkable *resemblance* between them, and in that very respect in which you state them to differ the most. Does the judgment decide according to the appearance of objects? So does the will; and if we consult fact, in no other way; inso-much, that the *will itself*, exclusive of the *actions*, or *motions*, that follow the will, may



not be improperly called a *particular judgment*, deciding on the *preferableness* of objects, according to their appearances, which are often very deceitful. For, judging by whatever *rule* you please, whatever object, at the moment of determination, appears *preferable*, that we always chuse. If, therefore, as I have said before, there be a power of self determination in the will, I should expect to find the same in the judgment also, and if you will distinguish them, in the judgment preferably to the will; if that may be called *judgment* which *decides*, tho' concerning the *preferableness* of objects. And there is no reason why this should not be the province of judgment, properly so called, as well as that of deciding concerning the *truth* of objects.

You object to the conclusiveness of my reasoning, p. 18, to prove that from one of your arguments it would follow that *judgment* and *volition* were the same thing, and the same with the *circulation of the blood*,

*blood, &c.* supposing that it goes on the idea of judgment being an *act* of the mind, only in the popular sense of the word. Now I will shew you that my inference was truly drawn, independent of any such definition of the word, as will appear by leaving out the word *act* altogether. You will then say, p. 80, “ Can that be truly said to be my  
 “ *volition*, which is produced by *something*  
 “ *over which I had no power*. On that  
 “ ground, every thing that takes place in  
 “ my *body*, as well as in my *mind*, may,  
 “ with equal propriety, be called my vo-  
 “ *lition*; and so the *circulation of the blood*,  
 “ and the *pulsation of the heart*, may, with  
 “ equal reason, be called my volitions.”

The medium of your proof, or the *middle term* in your syllogism, is not an *act*, but *something over which we have no power*. But, though the *circulation of the blood, &c.* should, upon the doctrine of necessity, agree with *volition*, in being *a thing over which we have no power*, it does not, in that

respect, agree with *volition only*, but with *judgment* also, and every other affection of the mind.

I may perhaps make the inconclusiveness of your argument more apparent, by reducing it to the form of a *sylllogism*, and framing another exactly similar to it. Your argument will then stand as follows. "According to the necessarians,

"Volition is a thing over which a man  
"has no power.

"But the pulsation of the heart is a  
"thing over which a man has no  
"power.

"*Ergo*, The pulsation of the heart is a  
volition."

A *sylllogism* exactly parallel to this of yours is the following :

A goose is an animal that has two feet.  
But a man is an animal that has two  
feet.

*Ergo*, A man is a goose.

But



I am sorry to have occasion to recall to your attention the first principles of logick, but it is plain you had overlooked them, when you thought you had reduced the necessarian to acknowledge that, on his principles, the *circulation of the blood*, and the *pulsation of the heart*, must be termed *volitions*. You meant to turn our principles into ridicule, and must take the consequence if the ridicule rebound upon yourself. You certainly had the merit of attempting something *new* in this, but there is always some *hazard* in attempting novelties.

## SECTION VI.

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SECTION VI.

*Of the Argument from the supposed CONSEQUENCES of the Doctrine of Necessity.*

TO my objection to your reasoning from the *consequences* of the doctrine of necessity, you reply, p. 4, "There are consequences that seem greatly to out weigh  
" all speculative reasonings of every sort  
" which can be thought of, and incon-  
" testably prove that the doctrine which  
" such consequences attend is not and  
" cannot be, true." You add, that Dr. Watts recommends the mode of arguing from consequences, and that I myself have adopted it.

Now this, sir, you do without making proper *distinctions*, which Dr. Watts, in  
the

the very passage which you have quoted, might have taught you to make. He says, that "the false proposition must be refuted by shewing that an evident *falsehood*, or *absurdity*, will follow from it," which is the very thing that I did, when I shewed that, in consequence of admitting your doctrine of liberty, you must suppose that *effects* take place without *adequate causes*, and that the Divine Being could have no prescience of human actions, which the scriptures every where suppose. On the other hand, the consequences that you draw from the doctrine of necessity only relate to things that you *dislike*, and *abhor*, and which have nothing to do with *truth*.

Shew me that any *falsehood*, or *absurdity*, as Dr. Watts says, follows from the doctrine of necessity, and I shall not then say, that we must *acquiesce* in it, and *make the best we can* of it. For it is absolutely impossible to acquiesce in an acknowledged  
falsehood



falsehood, as we may in a thing that we merely cannot *relish*. With respect to all things that merely excite *disgust*, besides that it may be conceived, that the disgust may be *ill founded* (and in this case it appears to me to be manifestly so) it is well known that there are many *truths*, and valuable ones too, that are *ungrateful*, especially at the first proposal.

Now I challenge you to shew that any proper *falsehood*, or *absurdity*, will follow from the principles of necessity, a thing that I *do* pretend to with respect to the doctrine of liberty. And do not any more say, as you do now, p. 6, that “it is in “ the same way of reasoning with that “ which I have used,” that you have endeavoured to support the doctrine of liberty. By this time, I hope, you see there is a great difference between the two cases.

## SECTION VII.

## SECTION VII.

*Of the MORAL INFLUENCE of the Doctrine  
of Necessity.*

YOU complain, but very unjustly, of my mode of reasoning, when I endeavour to undermine all that you have urged on the subject of the *dangerous consequences* of the doctrine of necessity. Your meaning, you say, p. 17, was “that it tends to in-  
“ dispose a person for virtuous activity,  
“ and self command, but that you suppose the necessarian to be active enough  
“ in gratifying his irregular and vicious  
“ inclinations.” Now I had no doubt of your *willingness* to make a distinction in this case, that is, to make the necessarian *indolent to good*, and at the same time *active*

to

*to evil*; but nature, not being of the party, makes no such distinction; so that the case you suppose is an impossibility.

If the belief of the doctrine of necessity has any operation at all, either to *activity*, or *inactivity*, it must respect all *ends*, or *objects*, *as such*, and without distinction, whatever they be, and can never operate one way if a man's inclinations be virtuous and another way if they be vicious. If on the one hand, I believe that my object will be accomplished, and my belief lead me to *overlook all means*, and therefore I give myself no trouble about it; or if, on the other, my belief of the necessary connection of means and ends be such as that my exertions are redoubled; still these different consequences respect *all objects alike*, and can never operate to the disadvantage of virtue, but on the supposition that all necessarians, *as such*, either are more indifferent to their own happiness than other men, or have less knowledge of the necessary

fary



fary connection between virtue and happiness.

If this was the case, surely you might, considering the length of time that has elapsed since the doctrine of necessity was first proposed by Mr. Hobbes, and even since it has been fully established, as I may say, by Dr. Hartley (and before my recollection, or yours, it had numerous advocates among men of letters) have been able to collect something like *positive evidence*; and you certainly should not have raised all this outcry without some better foundation than your own suspicious *imagination*.

## SECTION VIII.

## SECTION VIII.

*Miscellaneous Observations.*

**Y**OU eagerly catch, p. 27, at a casual, and as you think, an improper expression of mine, when I said that “the origin of action, or of self determination, is the same as the origin of the deity, concerning which we know nothing at all,” as if I really supposed the deity to have had an origin, or a beginning. Whereas, besides that you well know that I suppose, just as much as yourself, that the deity is properly *uncaused*, and consequently had *no origin*, and therefore that it *could* be no more than an inadvertent expression that you had got hold of, I have, in fact, said the same thing in this very place, viz. that proper action, or self determination, can have no beginning, because it must have commenced with the deity, who had none. This triumph  
of

yours, of which you seem willing to make so much, is, indeed premature.

If, in maintaining an opinion common to myself and Dr. Price, I should have said, that "the commencement of the creation" was the same with that of the deity himself;" would not the obvious construction have been, not that they both had a beginning, but that *neither* of them had any? In this case, also, I am just as far from intimating, in the most distant manner, that it was even *possible* for the deity to have had any *origin*. I must say that this construction of my words is very extraordinary.

You charge me, p. 33, with having mis-stated Dr. Price's opinion on the subject of liberty, as well as your own; but, though I am not sensible of having made any mistake in this respect, it is not a point that I choose to discuss with *you*. It is sufficient for my present purpose, if I truly

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state,



state, and fully refute, *your* opinion on the subject.

Here you must give me leave to observe, that it was very improper, on several accounts, to add the name of Dr. Price to those of Locke, Wollaston, Clarke, and Foster, as authorities in favour of the doctrine of liberty, for whom I ought to have had a *greater reverence*. I also could muster up a list of very respectable authorities, such as Collins, Leibnitz, Hutcheson, Edwards, Hartley, &c. but, for obvious reasons, I should have chosen to have confined it to the *dead*, and should have omitted the *living*, especially the man with whom my antagonist had a public and truly amicable controversy on the subject. Dr. Price, however, I am well persuaded, believes that my respect for him is not less than yours, notwithstanding I may imagine that his eye, though much stronger than mine, is not able to see through some little *cloud* that happens to hang between it and this particular subject.

Were

Were I to set about it, I should not doubt but that, though I cannot say *nos turba sumus*, I could draw out a very decent list of *living authorities* in favour of the doctrine of necessity, consisting of persons whose *ability, virtue*, and I will add *activity* too, you would not question. And were we to leave out those who would not pretend to have properly *studied* the subject, and therefore could not be said to give a vote, except by *proxy*, my list, among men of letters, might perhaps be not only as *respectable*, but even as *numerous* as yours. But this is a question that is not to be decided by *vote* or *authority*, but by *argument*; and it is on this ground that we are now engaged.

## SECTION IX.

*Queries addressed to Mr. PALMER.*

**T**HUS, Sir, I have distinctly replied to every thing that I imagine yourself can think *material* in your *Appendix*, in which you say you have “noticed” those parts of my Letter to you which “were deemed most material.” Now, as you would not have *voluntarily* undertaken the discussion of this argument with me, without having well weighed your force in it, and being determined to bring it to something more like a proper *close*; I hope that, notwithstanding you say you shall now “decline the controversy,” you will, on more mature consideration, *resume* it, and give me, as the *Spectator* pleasantly says, *more last words of Richard Baxter*. I shall



shall therefore tell you what I think you have omitted, and what it behoved you more particularly to have replied to in my Letter. And, farther, to make the *continuation* of the correspondence more easy to you, I shall state those matters in distinct *queries*, to which, if you please, you may reply in order.

1. You had said that a determination of the mind is not *an effect without a cause*, though it be not produced by any motive, because the *self-determining power itself* is the cause. I replied, that, allowing this supposed power to be the cause of *choice in general*, it can no more be considered as the cause of any *particular choice*, than the *motion of the air* in general can be said to be the cause of any particular *wind*; because all winds are equally motions of the air, and therefore, that there must be some *farther cause* of any particular wind. I desire you to point out the insufficiency of this answer. This it the more behoves you to do, be-

cause it respects not the *outworks*, but the very *inmost retreat* of your doctrine of liberty. If you cannot defend yourself against this attack, you must surrender at discretion. Necessity, with all its *horrid consequences*, will enter in at the breach; and, you know that necessarians, though slothful to good, are active enough in mischief, and give no quarter.

That you should say you had not passed over any thing of *the argumentative kind* in my *Letter*, which seemed to require a reply, and yet have overlooked this most material article, as well as many others, surprises me not a little.

On this subject, I also beg you would not fail to give particular attention to the fifth article of my *Additional Illustrations*, printed in the *correspondence with Dr. Price*, p. 288, in which, I think I have proved decisively, that the *mind itself* can never be considered as a proper and sufficient cause of *particular determinations*.

It

It was unfortunate for these *Illustrations*, that they did not appear till after the greatest part of your first treatise was written, and yet so long before your *appendix*, that I suppose they were forgotten. Though, as you had seen them before you wrote the *preface*, and consequently some time before the publication of your first piece, you had a good opportunity of animadverting upon them, and might be expected to do it in a case that so materially affected your main argument.

You now say, in general, that “ now “ I have read them, they appear as little “ satisfactory as the former; and that to “ all which Dr. Priestley has advanced in “ the correspondence, Dr. Price appears “ to have given a very clear and sufficient “ reply.” But this particular article, not being a proper part of the correspondence, you will find, that Dr. Price has not replied to it at all, and therefore your answer to it is not precluded. I particularly



intreat you to refute what is there advanced. Point out to me any thing in *your work*, which you think I have not sufficiently considered, and I promise to be as particular in my discussion of it as you please.

2. I endeavoured to shew, in my second Section, that the argument from the consideration of cause and effect does not, as you say, go on the supposition of *a similarity of the constituent principles of matter and spirit*, but only on the determination of the mind being subject to *any laws at all*; and therefore that the cause of liberty can derive no advantage from the commonly received principles of the *immateriality of the human soul*. You should have said, whether my reply was satisfactory to you, or not. But perhaps I am to interpret your *silence* on any subject to be an *acquiescence* in what I observed concerning it, and not as an article that you thought too obviously inconclusive to demand any reply.

3. Please to produce some direct proof of the existence of the *self determining power* you boast so much of. I mean a proof from *fact*, and not from a merely imagined *feeling*, or *consciousness* of it, which one person may assert, and another, who is certainly constituted in the same manner, may deny. What I assert is, that all we *can feel*, or be *conscious of*, in the case, is that our actions, corporeal or mental, depend upon our *will*, or *pleasure*; but to say that our wills are not always influenced by *motives*, is so far from being *agreeable*, that it is directly *contrary* to all experience in ourselves, and all observation of others.

4. You have said nothing to explain, or soften your denial of the doctrine of *divine prescience*, which, as a *christian*, and a *christian minister*, it greatly behoves you to do. You pretend to be shocked at the consequences of the doctrine of necessity, which exist only in your own imagination; but here is a consequence of your doctrine  
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of liberty, directly repugnant to the whole tenor of revelation, as it has been understood by all who have ever pretended to any faith in it, though they have differed ever so much in other things. It will be well worth your while to make *another appendix* to your book, if it were only to give some little *plausibility* to this business, and either to shew, if you can, that the divine prescience is not a doctrine of the scriptures, or that the sacred writers were mistaken with respect to it. Besides, it is incumbent upon you to shew, independent of your profession as a christian, how, on your own principles, any such *government of the world* as we see to take place could exist. To say, as you do, that God, notwithstanding his want of prescience, may yet govern free beings in the best manner that free beings *can* be governed, will avail you nothing; because I maintain, that if liberty be what you define it to be, a power of *proper self-determination*, such beings *cannot be governed at all*.



*all.* I have shewn that it is impossible they should ever be proper subjects of moral government. The Divine Being cannot controul their actions; the influence of all motives (the only instruments of moral government) will be altogether uncertain; he can form no judgment of their effect; and, in consequence, all must be anarchy and confusion.

But I would rather advise you to *retract* what you have too hastily advanced. If possible, think of some method of reconciling *prescience* with *liberty*; and by no means purchase your liberty at so very great a price. At least be *very sure*, in the first place, that it is worth so much.

If, as I suppose will be the case, you should not be able to reconcile *prescience* with your more favourite doctrine of *free-will*, be advised by me, rather than give up the former so lightly as you do, to keep it *at all events*; even though, in order to  
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do it, you should be obliged to rank it (as many truly pious christians do the doctrines of *transubstantiation* and the *Trinity*) among the *mysteries of faith*, things to be held sacred, and not to be submitted to rational inquiry. On no account would I abandon such a doctrine as that of *Divine prescience*, while I retained the least respect for revelation, or wished to look with any satisfaction on the moral government under which I live.

Lest you should think all this to be nothing more than affected seriousness, and the language of a mere controversialist, pushing his adversary on a precipice, I shall quote what a brother of yours in this very controversy with me observes; and it is no less a person than the celebrated Mr. Bryant. And when he (after Dr. Price and yourself) shall have advanced all that he is able, I should think the public will be satisfied that the most ample justice must have been done to that side of the question.

Speaking

Speaking of those who scruple not to give up the doctrine of *divine prescience*, rather than abandon that of *liberty*, he says, in his *Address to me*, p. 36, "They must then give  
" up the *scriptures* at the same time, and  
" with the *scriptures*, their *religion* and  
" *faith*. For in the sacred writings the  
" foreknowledge of the deity is not only  
" inculcated as a *doctrine*, but proved by a  
" variety of *events*."—If, sir, the earnest language of what you may suppose (though very unjustly) to be *enmity* fail to move you, let that of *friendship* prevail.

If after this repeated warning, you should persist in treating the doctrine of divine prescience as a thing of so little consequence, the most truly *candid* thing I can say is what you have quoted, and endeavoured to expose, as the extreme of *uncharitableness* when first advanced in my controversy with Dr. Beattie, on the same occasion. But because you may think the figurative expression too strong (though, in fact, the stronger it is  
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the better apology it makes) I shall say the same thing in other words. "It is what  
" the heat of disputation has betrayed you  
" into. You are blind to the consequences,  
" and therefore *you know not what you do.*"

5. I particularly desire you would once more go over with me the subject of the *practical influence* of the doctrine of necessity. This is far from being, in my opinion, the *dark side* of my argument. I love, and rejoice in this view of it; confident, and I hope I may add, *feeling*, that, when rightly understood, it is highly favourable to every thing that is great and good in man. Tell me whether the belief of the certainty of the end, *without* any idea of the necessary connection of the means by which it is brought about (which is the doctrine of *Calvinism*) does not work one way, and the belief of the certainty of the end, only *as a consequence* of its necessary connection with the previous means (which is the doctrine of *philosophical necessity*)  
does

does not work another way. Re-peruse my account of their different influences, and shew, from a juster view of the principles of human nature, that, with those apprehensions, men must feel and act differently from what I have supposed they naturally would do.

6. I likewise desire you would particularly attend to what I have observed in my seventh section, with respect to the use of the term *agency* and *responsibility*; because, if what I have there observed be just, you, and other defenders of the doctrine of liberty can derive no advantage whatever from any argument in which it is taken for granted, that man, in your sense of the terms, is an *agent*, and a *responsible* being; as I shew, that the state of moral government in which we are, is perfectly consistent with, nay, pre-supposes the doctrine of necessity; that for this purpose it is sufficient that man be, in the popular sense of the word only, and not in a sense that pre-supposes

supposes the doctrine of liberty, an *agent*, and *responsible*. Nay, I beg you would shew how man, constituted as you suppose him to be, can be a subject of moral government at all.

7. As you lay great stress on the feeling of *remorse*, I beg you would consider, and reply to what I have urged on that subject, in my letter to you, p. 62, and my *additional illustrations*, p. 296. If my state of the fact be just, no argument from that topic can avail you any thing; every just view of that subject being extremely favourable, rather than unfavourable, to the doctrine of necessity.

Please to observe that all these queries relate to matters strictly *argumentative*, or that must be allowed to have weight in forming our judgment on the subject in debate; and do not pass them over a second time, as if they were things of *another nature*, and such as you are under no obligation



gation to notice. Say, if you please, and *prove* it, if you can, that what I have advanced with respect to them is *inconclusive*; but do not pass them over in silence, as if they were not of an *argumentative* nature, or indeed, not very *materially* so.

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## THE CONCLUSION.

DEAR SIR,

I Do not know that it is necessary for me to call your attention particularly to any other points in contest between us; but I earnestly beg your explicit reply to these few. Many controversies have terminated without effect, and without any advantage to the cause of truth, merely because the parties have not come to a fair *issue*, but have left their readers wishing to know what the one or the other of them would have replied to this or that argument, or to

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this or that state, or view of it. I wish to carry this controversy to its *proper conclusion*. For my part, I will readily answer any question you shall think proper to propose to me, and shall do it without the least reserve or evasion. You *believe* that I would. I only beg that you would, in like manner, reply to me. More, I think, is to be done by distinct *interrogatories*, and categorical *answers*, than in any other manner. Let us, however, try this method. A very few more short pieces, which, with what we have already published, would not make too bulky a *single volume* for each of us, might, I think, exhaust all that we can now have to say that is material. Why then, when the trouble will be so little, and the advantage may be so great, should you decline this business prematurely? You have certainly as much *leisure* for the discussion as I have; and as it was you that called me out, and not I that called upon you, I should imagine you have not less *zeal* in the cause than myself.

You cannot apprehend from me any thing offensive to you in my manner of writing, any more than I can with respect to you; nor shall I take offence at *little things*. You may make what reflections you please on my *temper* or *manner*, and there are points enow to hit in both, if you be so disposed. You have my leave beforehand, to say that I am *insolent* in one place, and *arrogant* in another; and you may parody my most obnoxious paragraphs, whether *in* the work you are answering, or *out of it*, if it will serve to amuse yourself or your readers. If there be more of pleasantry than ill-nature in your strictures, I will cheerfully bear it all, and with Themistocles to Pausanias, say, *strike me*, and as often as you please, *but hear me*, and answer me.

Whatever I *have been*, or may be to *others*, you shall have nothing to complain of with respect to *yourself personally*; and I am so happy to find myself engaged with  
a person



a person of undoubted judgment in the controversy, that, I own, I am very unwilling to part with you so soon. I shall be like Horace's friend, and you must have recourse to as many shifts to get quit of me.

Hoping, therefore, to have the satisfaction of hearing from you again on the subject, and wishing your reply may be as speedy as will be consistent with its being *well weighed*, I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your very humble servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Calne, April 1786. DE61

